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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to ascertain if there were a difference in the work values of students who participated in cooperative education classes as compared to students who were enrolled in regular vocational and academic classes. Two questions, each with three subparts, were formulated to determine the effects of the three different programs on students' work values. Data were collected from 99 students (about one-third in each program) after they had participated in the programs, through administration of Super's Work Values Inventory (1970). All of the participants were high school seniors who were randomly selected from a stratified random sample of school districts in Mississippi. The results showed that the cooperative education seniors rated two work values significantly higher than the academic seniors: variety and associates. The vocational education seniors also rated associates as more important than did the academic seniors. The findings indicate that an employment situation that offers a variety of different tasks is a quality that is better understood by those high school seniors who have participated in a cooperative education program. Participating students also realized the importance of working with people with whom they enjoy working. The study recommended further research in 5-10 years to see if these students' values remained constant. (16 references) (KC)

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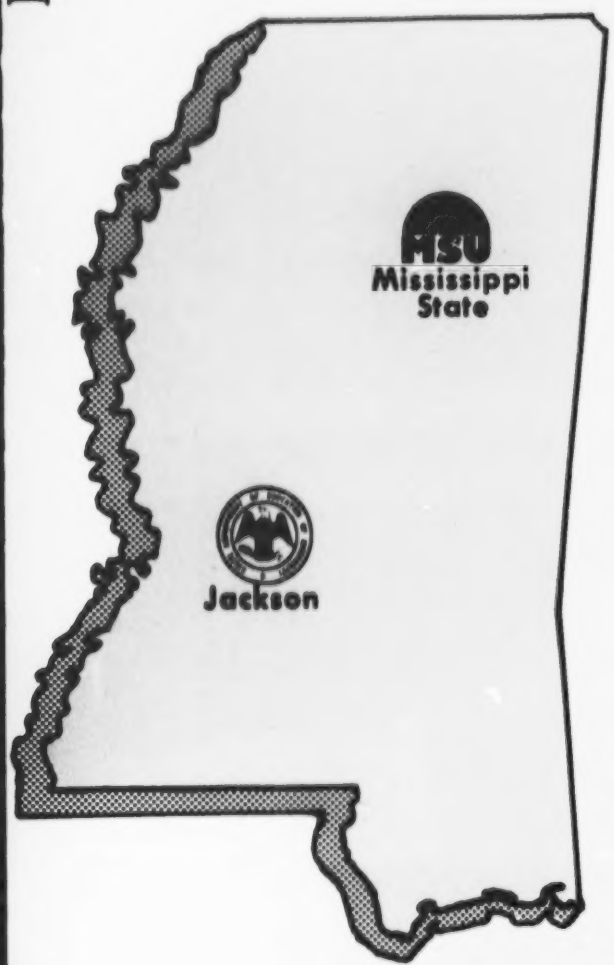


# THE IMPACT OF COOPERATIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ON STUDENT'S WORK VALUES

David A. Chandler

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The students who participated in the project were also a vital part and the sacrifice of their time and effort is greatly appreciated. Without them this study could not have become a reality.

Drs. James Shill and Edward Thomas offered many suggestions relative to the study. Many of their ideas may be found in the manuscript. I am indeed grateful to them for their input.

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## INTRODUCTION

Cooperative Vocational Education began based upon the precept that actual work experience, in conjunction with classroom instruction, was a superior method of assisting secondary school youth in developing positive work values (Meyer, Crawford, & Klaurens, 1975). This belief was again emphasized in The Vocational Education Amendments (1963 & 1968) when reducing unemployment was the driving force behind the legislation.

There has been a constant increase in the number of young people who work part-time while attending high school (Greenberger & Steinberg, 1981). Many of these high school students are in cooperative vocational education programs. These students receive classroom instruction related to their employment as well as firsthand experience on the job (Mason & Haines, 1965).

The Mississippi State Council on Vocational Education (1986) reported that cooperative vocational education had been effective in assisting the youth of today to be more successful in the world of work. The report recommended that a renewed emphasis be placed on diversified cooperative vocational education programs in all vocational fields. It further stated that not only is this method of teaching valuable for the students it serves, it is valuable for the economy in general. It increases the quality of the work force by enabling more working youth to remain in school in order to increase their education.

With more in-school youth working, it stands to reason that cooperative vocational education programs should be a vital part of our educational offerings if we are to meet our students' needs. It is

incumbent upon vocational educators to analyze the programs to determine whether, in fact, they are accomplishing their objectives.

## THE PROBLEM

The problem was to determine what effect cooperative vocational education has on work values of student participants. Specific questions of the study were:

1. Is there a significant difference in the mean scores earned on each of the 15 values of the Work Values Inventory (Super, 1970) among the following three groups:
   a. Senior students enrolled in Vocational Education who participated in the Cooperative Education Program.
   b. Senior students enrolled in Vocational Education who did not participate in the Cooperative Education Program.
   c. Senior students enrolled in a regular academic education program.
2. Is there a significant difference in the composite mean scores earned on the Work Values Inventory (Super, 1970) among the following three groups:
   a. Senior students enrolled in Vocational Education who participated in the Cooperative Education Program.
   b. Senior students enrolled in Vocational Education who did not participate in the Cooperative Education Program.
   c. Senior students enrolled in a regular academic education program.

## RATIONALE

Accountability in education is being emphasized by most educators during this period of budgetary restraint. A recent national survey of cooperative vocational educators revealed support for collection of data and evaluation of cooperative vocational programs for the purpose of reporting their effectiveness (Mills, 1987).

If it can be shown that cooperative vocational education programs are assisting students to develop work values which enhance their initial chances of employment and contribute to their success on the job, this information can be made available to other students who will benefit from enrolling in the programs.

Objective findings reporting accurate results of services provided by cooperative vocational education programs will provide substantial assistance to members of the Mississippi State Council on Vocational Education as well as other vocational education leaders who are responsible for planning vocational programs.

The most significant contribution of this research, however, will probably be its impact on cooperative education coordinators. The knowledge of whether their efforts are actually affecting the work values of their students will help the coordinators determine how to better serve their future students.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

The study was an ex post facto design which enabled the researcher to study the effects of treatment after it actually occurred (Kerlinger, 1973). This particular design was selected because it was necessary to

conduct the study after the students had participated in the various educational programs. The research design employed in the study was as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Systematic Sample<br>Academic Seniors | Treatment<br>One | Posttest |
| Systematic Sample<br>Vocational Seniors | Treatment<br>Two | Posttest |
| Systematic Sample<br>Cooperative Seniors | Treatment<br>Three | Posttest |

Random assignment of the students to specific educational programs prior to treatment was not feasible. The three educational programs compared in this study were regular academic programs, regular vocational programs, and cooperative vocational programs. The work values of students in each of these three programs were compared using Super's Work Values Inventory (1970).

The dependent variable "work values" was measured by Super's Work Values Inventory (1970). The independent variables in this study were academic education seniors, vocational education seniors, and cooperative education seniors in the state of Mississippi.

The lack of control of the independent variables due to the inability to manipulate treatment or to randomly assign subjects is recognized as an inherent weakness of ex post facto research studies (Kerlinger, 1964). Systematic selection is recognized as an acceptable substitution for random sampling (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1979) and does afford the study with results which are free of extraneous variables to the maximum extent possible. Restriction of the subjects to only seniors also provides an

opportunity for the maximum amount of treastment possible, as well as assists in the control of systematic or error variance.

## SUBJECTS

Senior students from the Clarksdale, Neshoba County, and McComb, Mississippi high schools were chosen from a stratified random sample representing schools offering cooperative vocational education in the northern, central, and southern geographical areas of Mississippi. Fifteen students for each group in each geographic location were systematically selected from a list which included all seniors in each group to participate in the study (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1972). This procedure provided forty-five students for each group to be studied. Each student selected had the project explained to him or her by the school counselor. The student was informed that it was voluntary as to whether he or she participated and was given a letter signed by the researcher and committee chairman explaining the project. Each student was asked to have his or her parent or guardian sign the letter indicating permission for the student to participate in the study. A sufficient number of students participated in the study to provide thirty-three students for the academic group, thirty students for the vocational group, and thirty-six students for the cooperative group. These numbers provided at least the recommended number for an adequate sample (Roscoe, 1975).

## MEASURING INSTRUMENT

Super's Work Values Inventory (1970) was the instrument used in the study to collect data concerning the students' work values. This instrument measures motivation for work in 15 areas: altruism, esthetics,

creativity, intellectual stimulation, achievement, independence, prestige, management, economic returns, security, surroundings, supervisory relations, associates, way of life, and variety (Super, 1970). It measures "values which are extrinsic to as well as those which are intrinsic in work" (p. 4). It is designed to measure the satisfaction individuals seek in work as well as the satisfaction which may be the outcome of work (Super, 1970). The 45-item instrument contains three statements relating to each of the 15 work values identified. Each item is rated as to whether the stated outcome is "very important," "important," "moderately important," or "unimportant" to the subject in the job he or she is seeking.

The instrument was standardized by administering it to a national sample of 10,083 students in grades 7-12. Test-retest reliability over a specified time interval has been internally consistent and stable ranging from a low of 0.74 to a high of 0.88 with a median of 0.83 according to Work Values Inventory Manual (Super, 1970). It is reported in The Seventh Mental Measurements Yearbook (Buros, 1972) that the instrument seems to measure what it is supposed to measure with adequate reliability.

Tiedeman stated in The Seventh Mental Measurements Yearbook (Buros, 1972) that:

> The inventory has been around for two decades. Hence it is not surprising that there is quite a bit of validity data available in the manual. These data suggest that the values constructs sought have been reasonably approximated in the scales, that the items in the scale have content validity, and that the inventory offers concurrent results with outside criteria in accord with expectations, although results are not markedly different, merely statistically so." (p. 1042)

## METHODOLOGY

The data for the study were collected by placing the name of each school system in the state of Mississippi which offered cooperative vocational education classes during the 1987-88 school year on a small piece of paper and placing the piece of paper in one of three containers. The containers were labeled northern, central, or southern and the name of each school system was placed in the container which represented its geographical location. One school system from each container was drawn to represent each region.

The Superintendent of each school system selected was contacted by mail. The project was explained and permission was requested to conduct the study in his school district.

Upon approval from the Superintendent, the school principal and vocational director of each participating school district were contacted by telephone. The study was explained to them and permission was requested to contact the counselors at their school. When permission was granted to contact the school counselor, the project was again explained to the counselor over the telephone. The academic counselor was asked to develop a list which included all high school seniors at that particular school. The vocational counselor was asked to develop two lists: one which included all vocational seniors and one which included all cooperative vocational senior students. From each list, then, fifteen students were chosen employing the procedure which is referred to as systematic sampling (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1979). An appointment was made with each counselor to visit the school system in order to administer the tests.

Each student selected was assured by the school counselor that the project was voluntary and that no information obtained would affect his or her records at the school in any way. The student was informed that no individual data would be reported and was given a letter explaining the project. The student was asked to deliver the letter to his or her parent or guardian to be signed and return it to the school counselor if he or she wanted to participate in the study. Each student who returned the permission letter signed by the student's parent or guardian was provided with a time and place to report for the testing.

The researcher administered the instrument and began each session by explaining again that the project was voluntary and would not affect any student's school record in any way. The purpose of the project was again explained to the students and it was emphasized that there were no right or wrong answers relative to the Work Values Inventory (Super, 1970), but that the opinion of each respondent was what the researcher would record.

Each student was then asked to indicate whether he or she was enrolled in a cooperative vocational class, a regular vocational class, or regular academic classes by writing "coop," "vocational," or "academic" in the place on the Work Values Inventory (Super, 1970) form designated for the subject's name.

After each student had recorded the correct information relative to program placement, the group was instructed to mark responses to the forty-five questions which followed. When all students had answered all questions the researcher thanked them for their participation, collected the material, and asked the accompanying school official to take charge of the group.

## FINDINGS

Analysis of variance was used to analyze the three groups on the 15 values, and multivariant analysis of variance was used to compare the three groups' responses on the total inventory. According to Gage (1963), treating numerical responses on a continual scale as interval data is an appropriate method of handling them. This treatment enabled the researcher to use this statistical technique.

Duncan's Multiple-Range Test was used to test the questions for differences among group means. The use of this statistic is necessary in order to determine the direction of the significant differences detected by the analysis of variance statistics.

### Specific Work Values

The first question examined whether there was a significant difference between the three groups' mean scores in any of the fifteen subscales of Super's Work Values Inventory (1970). Results of the study relative to this question are recorded in Table 1 on page 10. A significant difference was found in two of the fifteen subscales measured. There was a significant difference found in the associates subscale. The other subscale where a significant difference was recorded was variety.

### Duncan Test Results

The information in Table 2 on page 11 shows that the cooperative education seniors placed more value on the subscale associates than the academic seniors. There was also a significant difference found between the academic education seniors and the vocational education seniors relative to this variable, with the vocational seniors placing more

TABLE 1

Work Values of Fifteen Subscale Scores for Academic, Vocational, and Cooperative Education Students

| | Group Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Academic | | Vocational | | Cooperative | | | | Between Groups | | | Within Groups | | |
| Work Values | X | S.D. | X | S.D. | X | S.D. | F Ratio | F Prob. | d.f. | SS | MS | d.f. | SS | MS |
| Creativity | 3.88 | .79 | 3.93 | .71 | 4.05 | .79 | .43 | .65 | 2 | .5057 | .2528 | 96 | 56.9713 | .5935 |
| Management | 3.15 | .80 | 3.34 | .73 | 3.43 | .71 | 1.21 | .30 | 2 | 1.3483 | .6741 | 96 | 53.5967 | .5583 |
| Achievement | 4.33 | .62 | 4.38 | .50 | 4.45 | .60 | .39 | .68 | 2 | .2565 | .1283 | 96 | 31.9747 | .3331 |
| Surroundings | 4.00 | .65 | 4.18 | .54 | 4.31 | .57 | 2.34 | .10 | 2 | 1.6145 | .8073 | 96 | 33.1352 | .3452 |
| Supervisory Relations | 4.51 | .49 | 4.39 | .48 | 4.42 | .58 | .43 | .65 | 2 | .2371 | .1185 | 96 | 26.3510 | .2745 |
| Way of Life | 4.47 | .63 | 4.51 | .52 | 4.58 | .48 | .35 | .70 | 2 | .2116 | .1058 | 96 | 28.9197 | .3012 |
| Security | 4.46 | .52 | 4.53 | .60 | 4.37 | .76 | .54 | .59 | 2 | .4435 | .2218 | 96 | 39.6260 | .4128 |
| Associates | 3.70 | .63 | 3.52 | .65 | 4.01 | .63 | 5.03 | .01* | 2 | 4.0634 | 2.0317 | 96 | 38.7851 | .4040 |
| Esthetics | 2.86 | .87 | 3.14 | .85 | 3.31 | .78 | 2.63 | .08 | 2 | 3.6315 | 1.8158 | 96 | 66.3685 | .6913 |
| Prestige | 3.98 | .71 | 4.08 | .65 | 4.28 | .52 | 2.02 | .14 | 2 | 1.5979 | .7989 | 96 | 38.0273 | .3961 |
| Independence | 3.70 | .81 | 3.82 | .67 | 3.77 | .73 | .23 | .79 | 2 | .2498 | .1249 | 96 | 51.9814 | .5415 |
| Variety | 3.50 | .77 | 3.56 | .69 | 3.91 | .68 | 3.34 | .04* | 2 | 3.4287 | 1.7144 | 96 | 49.3479 | .5140 |
| Economic Returns | 4.44 | .69 | 4.64 | .52 | 4.54 | .60 | .85 | .43 | 2 | .6287 | .3144 | 96 | 35.5284 | .3701 |
| Altruism | 4.33 | .65 | 4.22 | .72 | 4.45 | .60 | 1.02 | .36 | 2 | .8819 | .4409 | 96 | 41.4414 | .4317 |
| Intellectual Stimulation | 3.88 | .69 | 3.79 | .63 | 3.87 | .58 | .19 | .83 | 2 | .1514 | .0770 | 96 | 38.5732 | .4018 |

*Significant at .05 level

TABLE 2

Results of Duncan's Test for Comparing Means for Work Values of Three Groups on the Work Values Inventory

| Work Value | Decision at .05 level |
|---|---|
| Associates | Coop. > Acad. |
| Associates | Voc. > Acad. |
| Variety | Coop. > Acad. |

Coop. = cooperative education seniors

Voc. = vocational education seniors

Acad. = academic education seniors

importance on this work value than the academic seniors. There was no significant difference in the importance given this variable by the cooperative education seniors and the vocational seniors.

The other subscale where a significant difference was found was in variety. Again, the cooperative education seniors considered this variable to be more important to them in their employment than the academic education seniors. There was no significant difference between the cooperative education seniors and the vocational education group or the vocational education and academic groups of students on the variety subscale. No other significant comparisons were identified on the remaining subscales.

Composite Work Values Scores

The second question was concerned with whether there was a significant difference in the overall composite means of cooperative education, vocational education, and academic education seniors on the Work Values Inventory (Super, 1970). Table 3 on page 13 provides an account of the composite scores. No significant difference was found among the three groups when composite mean scores were compared.

TABLE 3

Composite Scores of Work Values for Academic, Vocational, and Cooperative Education Seniors

| Work Values | Group Membership: Academic X | Academic S.D. | Vocational X | Vocational S.D. | Cooperative X | Cooperative S.D. | F Ratio | F Prob. | Between Groups d.f. | Between Groups SS | Between Groups MS | Within Groups d.f. | Within Groups SS | Within Groups MS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Composite Score | 3.95 | .34 | 4.00 | .31 | 4.12 | .40 | 2.06 | .1335 | 2 | .5183 | .2591 | 96 | 12.0967 | .1260 |

## CONCLUSIONS

This study was developed based on the questions relative to the impact of cooperative education programs upon the work values of high school seniors. The data indicate that cooperative education seniors placed more value on two of the fifteen work values measured by Super's Work Values Inventory (1970) than the academic seniors. The vocational education seniors rated one of these two work values as more important than the academic seniors.

The two subscales where a significant difference was detected were variety and associates. It should be noted that the differences recorded are in areas unrelated to more traditional work values such as job security or economic returns. For instance, Super (1970) reported that the variety subscale measures the importance workers place upon the ability to participate in a wide range of tasks. The cooperative education seniors rated this particular subscale as more important than the academic seniors. This finding indicates that an employment situation which offers a variety of different tasks is a quality which is better understood by those high school senior students who have participated in a cooperative education program.

The associates subscale measures the value placed upon the importance of working with peers whom the worker likes. This subscale brings into light the realization that one's work is a major part of his or her social life and it is important to work with people with whom he or she enjoys being associated. The vocational seniors as well as the cooperative education seniors rated this work value as being more important than the academic seniors.

## SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to ascertain if there was a difference in the work values of students who participated in cooperative education classes as compared to students who were enrolled in regular vocational classes and regular academic classes. Two questions, each with three subparts, were formulated to assist in determining the effect of the three different programs on students' work values.

The investigation was an ex post facto study in which the researcher collected data after the subjects had participated in the three different programs. Super's Work Values Inventory (1970) was administered to each subject in order to obtain the needed data for the study.

This study involved a total of ninety-nine students in the three groups. Thirty-three academic education students, thirty vocational education students, and thirty-six cooperative education students participated in the study. All of the student participants were high school seniors who were randomly selected from a stratified random sample of school districts in the state of Mississippi.

The .05 level of significance was chosen to evaluate the F probability values. There was a significant difference noted at this level in two of the fifteen subscales on the Work Values Inventory (Super, 1970).

The cooperative education seniors scored significantly higher than the academic seniors on the subscale variety. There was no significant difference detected between the cooperative education seniors and the vocational education seniors on this subscale. Neither was there a

significant difference found when comparing the mean scores of the vocational seniors and the academic seniors.

The cooperative education seniors and vocational seniors scored significantly higher than the academic seniors on the subscale associates. No significant difference was found when comparing the group means of the cooperative education seniors and the vocational seniors on this subscale.

There was no significant difference noted among the three groups in the other mean subscale scores. Neither was there any significant difference found when comparing the composite mean scores of the three groups.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that a study of the sample population be conducted in five to ten years to determine any change in work values. This longitudinal data would offer further insight into whether work values stabilize with employment. Such a study would also provide data relative to whether those who enter the work force with higher work values prove to be more successful employees.

Segregating the cooperative education students based upon occupations, length of time in the cooperative education program, and number of working hours per week in order to compare these various groups' work values would offer relevant information to the present body of knowledge. Such information could be utilized in the planning and implementation of future cooperative education programs by the vocational education leaders of the state of Mississippi.

Conducting further research including employer and school official ratings of the subjects studied, as well as the subjects' ratings of work values, would provide additional information which might prove helpful. The ability to determine whether there is a correlation between students' work values and the way their teachers and employers perceive them would provide additional information for the establishment of a data base that could serve as a foundation for future studies.

As with most research, similar studies which consisted of larger sample sizes and/or which represented larger geographical areas would add valuable information to the present body of knowledge. This additional research could be helpful in clarifying further the reasons for the noted differences in work values, as well as offering the possibilities of new revelations.

It is recommended that the findings of this study be made available to the various groups of school officials in the state of Mississippi. Cooperative education coordinators, vocational counselors, vocational directors, and school principals may take advantage of the information when planning future programs for their students.

Based upon the findings of this study, it seems appropriate to join the Mississippi State Council on Vocational Education (1986) in recommending a renewed emphasis in cooperative education programs for secondary education students in Mississippi.

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